

SECRETAPR 15
1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Outerbridge Harsey
Policy Planning Staff
Department of State

SUBJECT: Territorial integrity of Albania.

1. Perhaps the strongest psychological factor operative among Albanians which tends to direct their loyalty toward the Haxha regime is the general conviction among the population that only the present regime is fully capable of preserving the integrity of the country. The government in Tirana has successfully exploited the memory of past incursions from Yugoslavia, Italy and Greece to win a considerable measure of reluctant loyalty from its people, particularly those in the Army, police and security forces. To convince its subjects that only the present regime, with the backing of the USSR, can or will maintain an uncompromising attitude regarding Albanian independence and integrity, it utilizes the current Greek claims on the Northern Epirus, the supposed desire on the part of Italy to regain its former position of dominance, and the alleged Yugoslav intent to incorporate the country as the seventh federal republic or asserted plans for the partition of Albania between Yugoslavia and Greece.

2. In our attempts to counteract and break down this line, we have found the public declarations of prominent Yugoslav and Greek leaders most useful. Marshal Papagos went about as far as a practical Greek politician could go in his statement of 17 December 1952 before the new Greek parliament:

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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

"For the sake

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"For the sake of peace, and for the progress of the Balkan peoples, this Government would like to see the rest of our Northern neighbors /i.e. other than Turkey and Yugoslavia which were mentioned previously/ free and in friendly relations with Greece. Particularly in the case of Albania, the Government wishes to emphasize that in accordance with the policy resulting from the Peace Conference of 1946, it casts aside any violence, and intends to use only international legal means to adjudicate the problem of Northern Epirus..."

Marshal Tito was able to be more explicit in his 10 November interview with Sulzberger:

Sulzberger: I would like to know, speaking about the distant future, if Yugoslavia would like to spread her federation, to include in it Bulgaria and Albania, as this was planned?

Marshal Tito: Yugoslavia has no intention to include anybody, because this is against her principles. If in the future the Bulgarian people would like to join the Yugoslav Federation it is quite comprehensible that we would accept that. We would accept that in the future, regardless to the fact that somebody might not like that, but we would not do such a thing if that would provoke some disturbance, some war psychosis or create a center of war, the more so because this is not important to us. Friendly cooperation with these countries is important to us. We are against the creation of certain combinations which might produce for the world instead of appeasement a worsening of relations. In order that you might not misunderstand me I am emphasizing that I have said this in connection with the distant future, when such conditions exist in the world that this would be considered as a normal affair, when it is considered as normal that every nation has the right to decide itself upon its fate, to decide if it wishes to be together with other nations or alone.

Sulzberger: You know that Greece always, in the formal sense demanded that part which she names Northern Epirus, and Albanians Southern Albania. Now, when Greece is negotiating with Yugoslavia, has Yugoslavia taken up an attitude in this regard?

Marshal Tito: This is exactly the matter about which I spoke just now, emphasizing that we would not accept the inclusion of Bulgaria and Albania so long as certain elements of misunderstanding exist which might worsen relations between the states and provoke a center of war.

Sulzberger: Does this mean that Yugoslavia has no official attitude in regard to the Greek demand?

Marshal Tito: In this regard we have no attitude. It is our firm belief that Albania should be independent, that Albania, such as it is

capable (sic)

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capable (sic) to live if she were free. Albania of course is not independent today.

Vladimir Dedijer is quoted as follows in the Christian Science Monitor of 7 April 1953:

...Dedijer, a leading Yugoslav Government spokesman, denied suggestions that Yugoslavia has designs upon Albania. "Yugoslavia", he told Parliament, "wants a free and independent Albania and wants the Albanian people to be masters of their own fate and to decide for themselves the sort of regime they desire."

The above statements of the Yugoslav leaders and the Greek Prime Minister are qualified to a degree, but from a propaganda or psychological warfare point of view they are a great deal better than nothing at all. They have done something to counteract the line of the Albanian government that the country's neighbors wait only a suitable opportunity to start carving up the country.

3. Of great importance, in our view, is the need for a clear statement from the Italians. While it is possible to make a case in Albania that the Yugoslavs and Greeks are prepared to respect the integrity of the smaller country, charges that the Italians desire to regain their prewar dominant position must go largely unrefuted for lack of the simplest public statement from Rome. We suggest that the Department should raise the matter with the Italians, and suggest to them that Premier de Gasperi, incidentally taking note of the statements made by the Greek and Yugoslav leaders, clearly and publicly associate himself and his government with the desirability of a free and independent Albania within its present territorial frontiers in which no second country would exert a predominant influence.

4. Such a statement would not only be of value in counteracting Communist propaganda, but should appeal to the Italian Foreign Office as a

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move which would tend to stabilize the Balkan situation so far as it relates to the Albanian problem. The Agency's reporting (as of 17 March) indicates that the Foreign Office estimate is that the Albanian regime may collapse at any time, and that the Palazzo Chigi is fearful of partition or a territorial reduction of the country. The Foreign Office position is very reliably reported to the Agency as being rigidly insistent upon the necessity of preserving the integrity of Albania not only on historical grounds but also because of the effect the partition of a defecting satellite would have in the other curtain countries. If this is indeed the eventuality feared by the Italians, their best means of forestalling it lies in putting themselves clearly on the side of a conservative policy in order to play for the effect this move would have in inhibiting the Yugoslavs and Greeks.

5. The policy of seeking a free and independent Albania is fully in line with U. S. desires. The following is quoted from the Department's secret Airgram A-334 of 18 March 1953:

...This implication that United States policy favors or is susceptible to the establishment of a democratic Albania oriented toward Italy is erroneous. There is no orientation in present Department thinking on Albania which is specifically partial to any one of Albania's neighbors, on the contrary the Department seeks the establishment of a free and independent Albania within its present territorial frontiers in which no neighboring country would exert predominant influence.

The above statement appeals to us as well conceived; it would be far more useful if it were made public. You might give consideration to recommending that the Secretary reply in such terms to a planted press conference question. We are not prepared to suggest that the Department involve itself at this time in any formal statement regarding Albania's frontiers, particularly in view of the Senate Resolution of 1946, which unfortunately has been forgotten in

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neither Greece nor Albania, but an informal, direct quote comment to the press publicly associating the Secretary with the Department's current policy would be most helpful.

6. In summary, then, the following two steps are recommended to the Department:

a. Consider the advisability of asking the Secretary of State to make public U.S. desires (as summarized in the Department's airgram cited above) regarding the independence and territorial integrity of Albania.

b. Press the Italians for a parallel statement attributable to Premier de Gasperi.

7. Your earliest advice on the action the Department will be able to take regarding these matters will be much appreciated.

FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PLA

SIGNED
BY

SE/ACPP
9 April 1953

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